

Understanding and Improving Intelligence Analysis: Learning from other Disciplines

8 June and 13 July 2012 at Brunel University in Uxbridge, West London, UK

Call for Papers and Presentations

The purpose of these two events is to engage in a cross-disciplinary discussion about the value of learning from other fields to improve both the understanding and the practice of intelligence analysis. It will also create the network and infrastructure for an international consortium for the study of intelligence analysis.

Intelligence, like journalism, involves the acquisition, evaluation, and dissemination of information. In 1949, Sherman Kent, described as the father of US intelligence analysis, said: "*Intelligence organizations must also have many of the qualities of those of our greatest metropolitan newspapers. ... They watch, report, summarize, and analyze. They have their foreign correspondents and home staff.... They have their responsibilities for completeness and accuracy—with commensurately greater penalties for omission and error. . . They even have the problem of editorial control.... Intelligence organizations (should) put more study upon newspaper organization and borrow those phases of it which they require.*"

The event on 8 June 2012 will be devoted to what we can learn from this comparison between intelligence analysis and journalism. We want to take Sherman Kent's suggestion and expand on it; to look at this comparison from a variety of perspectives to include how new technologies have produced new sources of information and the resulting need to compete for consumers' attention.

But the similarities between intelligence analysis and journalism are not unique. Professionals in other fields—including medicine, the social and behavioural sciences, history and historiography, anthropology and other disciplines engaged in ethnographic research, econometric forecasting, and legal reasoning—also face many similar challenges to those that exist in intelligence analysis, including:

- Difficulties acquiring information from a wide variety of sources
- Vetting and evaluating the information that is acquired
- Deriving understanding and meaning from that information
- Impact of deadlines, editing, and other production processes on accuracy of analysis and assessment
- Problems in dissemination and distribution to consumers or customers
- Managing relationship between producer and consumer (role, responsibility, independence & objectivity)
- Developing professional infrastructure (recruit, select, train, & develop personnel; code of ethics)
- Overcoming impact of changing technology and alternative information distribution systems

The event on 13 July 2012 will be devoted to explaining how practitioners in various non-intelligence fields overcome these kinds of challenges. How are their challenges similar to or different from those that exist in the intelligence arena? What can be learned from the comparison?

We welcome paper and presentation proposals evaluating best practices for overcoming challenges in any non-intelligence field that are analogous to those that exist in the intelligence field, or compares/contrasts challenges in intelligence analysis to those faced by professionals in other disciplines.

To submit a proposal, send an email to Stephen Marrin (stephen.marrin@brunel.ac.uk) by 18 March 2012 with: (1) Name of author/presenter, affiliation/institution and contact information (email and phone); and (2) Paper Title and Abstract (a brief 200-500 word overview of the paper/presentation)

Notifications of acceptances will be made on or before 1 April 2012.

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